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ABSTRACT

In 1990, various Philadelphia organizations embarked upon a project where each group used its skills and energies to identify and conduct research on issues in public education. Groups conducted surveys, chose topics, strategized about possible actions, and jointly adopted recommendations. Each worked individually on implementing the recommendations and enhancing the others' work. The first issue they chose was teacher shortages. This first joint report explains that the School District of Pennsylvania, currently the sixth largest district in the nation, is in the midst of a serious shortage. It has a majority of African American and Latino students, with most students coming from low income families. Increasing student enrollment, a wave of teacher retirements, and the need for smaller class size are common factors cited for the shortage. Other factors include low pay, difficult working conditions, negative public image, a cumbersome hiring processes, and residency requirements. This paper describes local and national responses that focus on improving teacher compensation, public image, hiring processes, and residency requirements. Recommendations are presented for increasing financial incentives to encourage teachers to come and teach in Philadelphia, changing the residency requirement, and improving the public image, hiring process, and residency requirement. (Contains 14 references.) (SM)

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The City - Neighborhood Schools Initiative

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Who Will Teach Our Children?

March 2001

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The City-Neighborhood Schools Initiative

a joint project of

Philadelphia Citizens
for Children and Youth

and

The Alliance Organizing Project

March, 2001

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The Organizations

Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth

Founded in 1980, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) serves as the region's leading child advocacy organization and works to improve the lives and life chances of the region's children. Through thoughtful and informed advocacy, community education, targeted service projects and budget analysis, PCCY seeks to watch out and speak out for the children in our region. PCCY undertakes specific and focused projects in areas affecting the healthy growth and development of children, including after-school, child care, public education, child health and child welfare. PCCY's ongoing presence as an outside government watchdog and advocate for the region's children informs all of its efforts.

The Alliance Organizing Project

The Alliance Organizing Project is a membership-based organization of parents and others in Philadelphia organizing to build power and improve schools so that all children can achieve. AOP reaches these goals through building relationships among all stakeholders, developing leaders, building parent groups, and waging issue campaigns on a local school and citywide level.

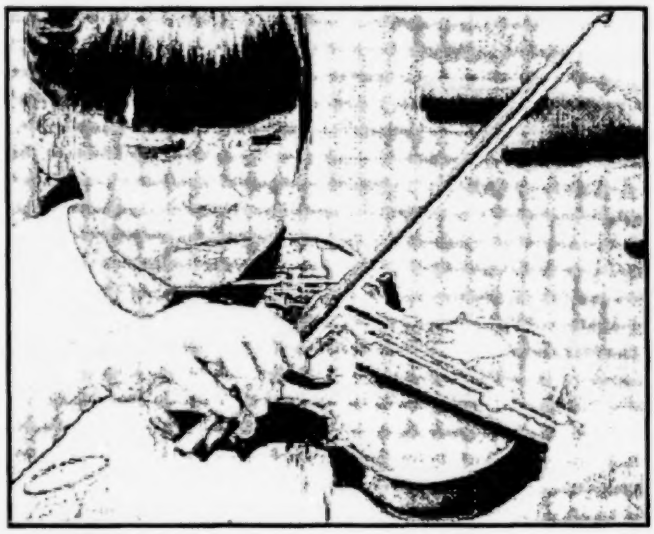
Preface

In the fall of 2000, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, the region's leading child advocacy organization, and the Alliance Organizing Project, the region's grassroots parent organizing project, came together to officially build on each other's strengths.

While keeping their own agendas and continuing the coalition efforts with others interested in public education, they formally undertook a project where each group would use its skills and energies to identify and conduct research on issues in public education, conduct surveys, choose topics, strategize about possible actions and jointly adopt recommendations. Each would individually work on implementing the recommendations and each would enhance the other's work.

The first issue the groups chose to work on was the teacher shortage. This, then, is the first joint report.

Introduction



"Teach Our Children Well"
as the song goes...

But, Who Will Teach Them?

Introduction

Experts predict that the nation's public schools will need to hire more than 200,000 teachers each year for the next decade. More than 1/3 of these teachers will be needed in poor urban and rural communities.[1] As school districts scramble to fill vacancies, schools that serve low income and minority populations will have the most difficulty, often having to employ less than qualified teachers. The School District of Philadelphia, with a majority of its students African-American or Latino, and close to 80% of its pupils coming from low-income families, is already in the midst of a serious shortage.

> ***"This year I had to take an elective class in place of my Spanish 2 class because there is no Spanish teacher. I had Spanish last year and it was great, but I'm worried because colleges require two to four years of second language courses."***
>
> - A Philadelphia high school student

Increasing student enrollment, a wave of teacher retirements and the need for smaller class size are common factors cited for the shortage.[2] Additionally, fewer people are choosing to enter teaching. There are many reasons for this; some are positive and others are not.

On the positive side, increased job opportunities within non-teaching fields have opened up to a larger segment of American society. Women and members of other minority groups that have faced discriminatory hiring practices and other employment barriers are now able to build successful careers in a variety of professions. Teacher-preparation programs at colleges and universities throughout the country are struggling to compete with other disciplines for students; too often, they are losing the battle.

The challenge of more opportunity in other fields is not being adequately met by improving incentives for people to choose teaching. The salary gap between teachers and other professionals, and between teachers in low-income districts and wealthier districts, exacerbates the situation.

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In its **Quality Counts 2000** study, *Education Week* reported an increasing salary gap between students graduating with education degrees and college graduates with other majors. Within 1998 alone, teachers between 22-28 years of age earned $7,894 less per year than other college-educated adults of the same age.[3] According to the study, the gap becomes three times greater for teachers between 44 and 50, who earn about $23,000 less than their counterparts in other occupations. From 1994-1998, the average salary for a person with a master's degree outside of teaching had increased 32% while the average salary for teachers with masters' degrees had increased less than $200.[4] Thus even with advanced education, teachers receive substantially less in salary than professionals in other fields.

The work is more challenging than many expect; nationally, 20% of newly hired teachers leave the profession within three years and more than 9% of newly hired public school teachers leave before the end of their first year. According to the teachers' union in Philadelphia, close to 40% of new teachers abandon the School District within the first year. Although this number seems high, clearly teacher retention is a problem. At the other end of the spectrum, the average age of teachers is now at 44, leading districts throughout the country expecting a wave of retirements shortly.[5]

In recent years, the increasing prominence of education to our society's future should be attracting people into the profession, yet the increasing emphasis on testing, on accountability and the difficulty of the task itself operates as a disincentive to those considering entering the field.

There are some signs of hope for the future. Reports have shown that more than 10% of college freshmen say that they are interested in becoming teachers, which is the highest percentage since the 1970's.[6] Additionally, the number of applications to some of the nation's graduate schools of education has steadily risen recently.[7]

But the number of applications to teach has dropped in Philadelphia. The number of prospective teachers applying to the District fell by 2/3 between September 2000 and January 2001 compared to the same time period the previous year. The critical need to find, support and attract good teachers to all our schools then, is a local and national challenge.

The Philadelphia Story

A Teacher Shortage Crisis

The Philadelphia Story

"My daughter was in first grade, and the teacher was out. She had substitute after substitute. They didn't do anything. All they did was play. When she got into second grade, she was behind in reading a whole year."

- Parent

The School District of Philadelphia, currently the sixth largest district in the nation, is experiencing a teacher shortage crisis.

The year began with 250 vacancies; currently there are 133. Two hundred long-term substitutes joined other individuals with emergency certifications in teaching our students.

√ 483 individuals who had completed teacher preparation programs but had not passed the state teacher certification examination were teaching classes.

√ 850 Apprentice Teachers were teaching classes.

Between 1,500 and 2,000 teachers are teaching in Philadelphia schools without full certification. These numbers do not include the 500 Literacy Interns who share a classroom with another teacher.

The largest number of vacancies exists in special education, science, mathematics, Spanish, and physical education.

With more than 1,500 individuals working with emergency certifications and an average of 30 kids in a class, means more than 45,000 students are being taught by less than qualified teachers. Another 3,210 are being taught by substitutes. These 45,000 students represent more than 20% of the entire student enrollment.

Glossary

Long Term Substitutes: Receive annual salaries and the same benefits as regular teachers, have college degrees and at least emergency teacher certification.

Short Term Substitutes: Paid by the day, do not receive benefits, have college degrees and are working with emergency certification.

Apprentice teachers: College graduates teaching classes while they work toward their permanent teacher certification (see Reference 3 - Page 54)

Literacy Interns: College graduates who are working toward teacher certification and are paired with veteran teachers in the classroom (see Reference 3 - Page 54)

Emergency Certification Requirements for Long and Short-term substitutes:
1) Must have a college degree

Requirements for Emergency Certification of all other teachers and literacy interns:
1) Must be enrolled in alternative certification program at a college or university.

2) Must attain nine credits towards permanent certification each year.

What's Behind The Teacher Shortage?

Low Pay - Difficult Working Conditions - Negative Public Image - Cumbersome Hiring Process - Residency Requirement

What's Behind The Shortage?

> ***"When my son was in 3rd grade, after the 4th month the teacher was out permanently for the rest of the year because her father was sick. Because of that, my son was 6 months behind in reading. The reading teacher tested him at the end of the third grade year and I was told that he was reading on a 2nd grade level."***
>
> - Parent

Low Salaries

Over the last few years, the salary gap between suburban and Philadelphia school district teachers has widened. On average, starting salaries in the 1999/2000 school year for suburban teachers were more than $3,000 higher than salaries offered in the City. The maximum salaries of veteran teachers with bachelor degrees within the District was $10,000 less than those of suburban teachers with the same qualifications.[8] Although changes in the new teacher contract will improve the salary for Philadelphia's teachers, funding disparities will continue to exist and contribute to the exodus of qualified teachers from city to suburban school districts.

Difficult Working Conditions

Philadelphia teachers usually work in older larger buildings with larger class sizes and fewer supports than most other districts in the state. In recent years the District has lost specialists such as librarians, reading teachers, music and art teachers; school counselors and nurses. There is a constant clamor for more and better supplies, more security and more support. Additionally, there is escalating concern about safety. While Philadelphia schools are still safer than many of the communities in which they sit, that's not good enough. Too many schools are viewed as out-of-control or unsafe by students, faculty and the community.

Negative Public Image

Both the City and School District have difficulty overcoming some aspects of their public image. Each suffers from population exodus, inadequate tax or fiscal support, a tradition of emphasizing its faults and dividing into factions instead of coming together. Historic and recent tensions between labor and management in the schools, yearly funding crises which never seem to be resolved, on-going budget cuts as a result of funding problems, an increasingly poor population with escalating needs and decreasing supports add to the public image problem.

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers / City / School Board Struggle Fall 2000

The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT),City, School Board strife in the fall of 2000 made national headlines and was viewed by many as splitting the education stakeholders. Every day from the late summer until a collective bargaining agreement was reached on November 3rd, newspapers, radio and television discussed the possibility of a strike. While a weekend work stoppage did occur, students never missed school. But, the constant focus on negative relations between the union, the District and the City has taken a toll on prospective applicants for teaching jobs.

> ***"I was saddened by the whole situation. The threat of a State takeover of the schools and the disunity between the city, school board, and union made the District look like it could not take care of its kids. It definitely tarnished the image of the District."***
>
> - Graduate student at a local university

Violence In The Schools

Over the past few years, the District has received negative publicity about school violence. Although media accounts of incidents are often exaggerated and inaccurate, violent incidents continue to raise the level of fear that is shared among many current and prospective teachers. A State Legislative Committee recently held hearings and issued a strong report on violence in schools. As with union relations, constant media attention on violence has taken a toll on prospective applicants for teaching jobs.

> ***"Two years ago my son went to the middle school for the first time and he didn't have any teachers. They only had aides in the classroom. No teachers. None of the teachers in the school wanted to work with that class. The kids were very bad. We've had three principals in the last three years, and the one we have now is the only one who seems to care. Anyway, it was a disaster. They were fighting. They would throw chairs, and they even broke a window."***
>
> - Parent

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Cumbersome and Late Hiring Process

For several years, prospective teachers have voiced concerns over the hiring process within the District. The process is protracted and confusing. Teachers are given late hiring notification, are often unaware of their school placements until late in the summer, and are not aware of all of the incentives that are available to them. Part of the inefficiency of the overall process can be attributed to the lack of a computerized hiring system. Recently, there has been improvement, but there is still much to be done.

> ***"I wanted to teach in Philadelphia but the suburbs made me an immediate offer and no one seemed interested or able to tell me whether or where I'd be able to teach in Philadelphia."***
>
> - A prospective teacher

Residency Requirement Discourages Applicants and Increases Resignations

New teachers are required to move into the City within three years of their hiring date. A number of surveys conducted by the Philadelphia Education Fund have indicated that the residency requirement is a major employment barrier. In a 1999 survey of student teachers in the School District, the residency requirement was the number one factor that discouraged individuals from seeking employment in the District.[9] A similar finding was revealed in a study of middle school teachers new to the District during the 1999-2000 school year; 50% of the teachers who were interviewed said the residency requirement might cause them to leave the District.[10]

> ***"I began teaching in the fall of 1998, and I have to move in the city next year. There are so many other obstacles to keeping good teachers in Philadelphia - the pay, the lack of resources, the unsafe conditions, the lack of support - that the residency requirement is a slap in the face. It's ridiculous for me to have to move 15 miles just to be within the city limits; it seems like such a common sense non-issue."***
>
> - A Philadelphia school teacher

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A Closer Look

Over the past few months, parent leaders and staff members of the Alliance Organizing Project visited schools, spoke with students, parents, teachers and principals to learn about teacher supply. Below are a few examples of what they discovered.

In an elementary school visited, there were two teacher vacancies filled by substitutes, and six other classrooms being taught by teachers who were not fully certified. The principal estimated that they would be short another five teachers at the start of the next school year.

With an average of thirty students in each class, there were 240 children in this school being taught by teachers who were not fully certified.

> ***"My daughter's teacher quit before the school year started and she had no permanent assigned teacher until late November. Until then she was farmed out to different classes with different teachers throughout the first quarter. Sometimes she was placed in classes of a different grade level. As a result of her not having a consistent, let alone permanent, teacher, she did not get graded for the first marking period."***
>
> - Parent

In a middle school visited, there were two vacancies filled by long-term substitutes, and eight other classes that were covered by individuals who were not fully certified. With an average of thirty-three students in a class, there were about 297 students in this school being taught by teachers who were not fully certified.

> ***"In a class with one teacher for 32 first graders, my daughter does not receive the one-on-one attention needed for success. It's even worse for students with special needs who are lost in the shuffle. I'm fearful about talk that I am hearing about creating mixed grade classrooms because of understaffing. I feel that this would hold back older children and bewilder younger children."***
>
> - Parent

In a high school visited, there was one vacancy in Spanish, five teachers who were not fully certified and three classes covered by substitutes. Again, with an average of thirty-three students to a class, there were about 297 students in this school being taught by teachers who were not fully certified.

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Local and National Response

Teacher Compensation

Local and National Response
Teacher Compensation

Local

Philadelphia has taken several important steps to improve the salaries and financial incentives for teachers.

√ **Signing Bonus** – A $4,500 bonus, paid over the first three years, is provided for new teachers. Teachers receive $1,500 after six months on the job and an additional $3,000 after three years of employment.

√ **Loan Forgiveness** - All new teachers in Pennsylvania have loan forgiveness options available to them through their college and the federal Perkins loan program. The program reduces the amount of money owed on the loan in return for teaching in schools with low-income populations. In addition, State legislation has recently been introduced to expand the current loan forgiveness opportunities for hard to staff areas.

√ **Housing Incentives** - Teachers are provided with a list of apartments that give a 10% reduction on apartment costs and are referred to mortgage companies that provide special home ownership opportunities such as lowered interest rates.

√ **Enhanced Compensation Incentives** - In the new teacher contract, salary incentives will be offered to individuals teaching in selected hard to staff schools.

National

Signing Bonuses

There is a growing trend among school districts throughout the country to provide financial incentives for incoming teachers to offset the low starting salaries. Typically, these incentives are given as signing bonuses and range from $1,000-$5,000. Some bonuses are given out over the course of a few years, and there is usually a higher bonus paid to individuals who teach hard-to-staff subject areas: special education, math, science, and foreign language.

Loan Forgiveness

Many school districts are attracting teachers by offering to pay a portion or the full amount of college loans. Typically these programs are found where there are teacher shortages within critical areas.

Georgia's Hope Scholarship Program – The Promise Teachers Initiative provides $1,500 in loans repaid for each year spent in urban or rural public schools. Graduate Level Teacher Scholarships provide $2,500 in loans repaid for each year spent in urban or rural public schools.

New York City - The Board of Education will repay the student loans of prospective employees who meet New York State certification requirements and are eligible and willing to fill shortage area positions.

Tuition Assistance

Many districts offer tuition assistance for employees pursuing master degrees or coursework leading to one or more types of certification.

Portland (Oregon) - Teachers who are currently employed within the district are eligible for six hours of paid graduate school credits per year.

Boston - The district pays half of the tuition toward a master's degree in education through collaboration with a local college.

New York City's Teaching Opportunity Scholarship Program (TOPS) - Full tuition scholarship for master's in education is provided for individuals with a Bachelor's Degree in math or the sciences.

Housing / Relocation Incentives

A growing number of districts are offering newly hired teachers housing and relocation incentives. These incentives typically consist of reduced rates on apartments, low interest homeowner loans, and money towards the purchase of a new home.

Los Angeles and Baltimore – Both of these districts have partnered with HUD through the Teacher Next Door Program to provide teachers the opportunity to purchase homes for as little as half of the list price. Additionally, teachers in Baltimore are given $5,000 towards the purchase of a new home.

Portland – The district has a partnership with the Portland Teacher Credit Union that provides all teachers within the district the opportunity to secure a major home loan, with no down payment, at a preferred interest rate.

Clark County (Las Vegas) – Through a collaboration with an apartment management company, teachers are offered reduced rent for first year and many of the initial fees (i.e. first and last months rent, security deposit) are waived.

Accommodating Student Teachers

A variety of districts offer housing incentives for student teachers to encourage them to remain in the district after their student teaching.

Clark County (Las Vegas) – The district has an arrangement with an apartment management company that offers a three-month lease for student teachers.

Jefferson County Public Schools (Kentucky) Project Rise Program – The district assists student teachers with housing within specific dorms while student teachers completing the last twelve hours of their teaching certification (one semester). The program pays for books, a living stipend and housing. In return, student teachers must commit to work for one year in the district.

Local and National Strategies

Improving Public Image and Attracting Teachers

Local and National Strategies Improving Public Image

School districts have taken numerous steps to present a positive image to attract and retain qualified teachers. A look at some of the nation's largest urban school districts reveals that, for the most part, human resource departments have employed similar strategies to solve their teacher shortage problems. We took a look at some of the larger districts including New York, Miami-Dade, Clark County (Las Vegas), Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Atlanta, Boston, Minneapolis, Austin, Portland, San Francisco and a few others.

Philadelphia's Marketing and Recruitment Strategies

√ **Job / Career Fairs** – The District participates in career fairs throughout the country and conducts regular recruiting visits to colleges and universities with teacher education programs.

√ **Internet Recruitment** - The District's websites allows prospective teachers to find out information as well as complete teacher applications electronically. This makes it more convenient for people to apply. However, the District still relies on a paper filing system which contributes to the inefficiency of the entire process. The District also recruits teachers through various job search websites.

√ **International Recruitment** - The District participates in recruitment efforts abroad including visiting Spain to attract much needed Spanish teachers. The District also recruits in India.

√ **Future Teachers of America** – Many of Philadelphia's public schools participate in this "grow your own" program as a way of encouraging middle and high school students to choose teaching as a profession. This program operates as an after-school club. Currently, the District is establishing its own pre-teaching academies in selected high schools to encourage students to become teachers.

√ **Bilingual Career Ladder Program** – This program encourages bilingual para-professionals to become teachers by providing special opportunities for them to work towards permanent teacher certification.

√ **Attracting Professionals to Philadelphia** – Philadelphia has apprentice teachers, Teach Philadelphia (a subsidiary of Teach for America), Troops-to-Teacher's Program, Literacy Interns and The Pennsylvania Teacher Intern Program (See Reference 3 - Page 54 for details on these programs)

National Marketing and Recruitment Strategies

√ **Career Fairs** - All of the school districts we spoke with participate in job and/or career fairs as a way of recruiting qualified teachers. The fairs range from large, national job employment conventions, to visiting on-campus recruiting centers at colleges and universities. In general, the larger urban school districts with high teacher vacancy rates tend to conduct recruitment efforts throughout the country. The smaller districts or those with minimal vacancies tend to recruit within their own region.

√ **Internet recruitment** - The growing use of the Internet among college students has prompted the larger urban districts throughout the nation to undertake aggressive electronic recruiting, including district websites, which provide prospective teachers with information about the district and its employment opportunities. Many districts have upgraded their district websites to allow candidates to electronically submit applications or download resumes, which expedites the hiring process. All of the districts surveyed post employment opportunities on the major Internet job search websites.

√ **International recruitment** - There is a trend among districts to travel abroad in search of qualified teachers. Most of these districts have targeted Canada, Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to fill hard to staff positions. The districts we spoke with have some form of official partnership with either the country's government or with certain universities.

Chicago's Global Educators Outreach Program - This program was created through a partnership with the US Department of Labor and the Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service that expands recruitment efforts to other areas of the world. Through collaboration with local colleges and universities, teachers within the Global Educators Outreach Program are housed in college dorms. Chicago has had a great deal of success filling vacancies with these qualified teachers.

Atlanta's Visiting International Faculty Program - This program provides a higher rate of pay to the most experienced teachers they recruit. The District reported that this program has worked well to attract quality teachers into the District.

√ **Teacher to Student Teacher Conversations** - In addition to attending job and career fairs, a few districts have hired part-time corps of teachers to conduct information and counseling sessions with education majors.

New York's Hard-To-Staff Project - Veteran and new teachers are hired to visit campuses year round to find individuals willing to teach within the City's hardest to staff schools. A recruiter reported that this program has been tremendously successful because it provides prospective teachers with a first-hand account of what it is like to teach within NYC inner city schools.

Chicago Public Schools - The Human Resources Department reported having had a great deal of success recruiting teachers through the facilitation of small, open conversations between experienced teachers and prospective teachers.

> ***"These meetings have helped to dispel many of the myths and misconceptions that many people have about living and teaching within Chicago."***
>
> – Recruiter for Chicago Public Schools

√ **Prospective Teacher School Visits** - A simple strategy for recruiting teachers is giving prospective teachers the ability to take school tours during their application process. All of the districts we spoke with were willing to grant a school tour requests; however only a few reported offering this as a planned option to prospective candidates.

Minneapolis - Prospective teachers from around the nation who are interested in teaching within the district take tours of public schools in groups. The district reported this as an extremely effective recruiting strategy because it allows prospective teachers to see what the schools look like first hand as well as bond with other prospective teachers.

√ **Reaching Out to High School Students** - Numerous surveys conducted on new teachers throughout the 1990's revealed that the majority of these individuals choose teaching as a profession while in middle or high school. As a result, a growing number of school districts are working in collaboration with national education support organizations to prepare middle and high school students for a career in teaching. These pre-collegiate programs are often focused on providing practical teaching experiences, pairing students with experienced veteran teachers who serve as role models, and creating opportunities to enter into teacher-preparation programs in college. This long-term strategy for recruiting teachers has been effective in reducing teacher vacancies throughout the nation. The following are some programs that have worked across the country:

Programs that Reach Out to High School Students

√ **Future Teachers of America and Future Educators of America** – Both of these programs serve as national models for programs that are instituted in middle and high schools throughout the country. Each chapter operates independently; however they typically operate as after-school clubs and provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills that they will need to become successful teachers.

√ **Chicago's Grow Your Own Program** - Chicago provides many special opportunities to encourage high school students to enter teacher preparation programs and then return to the district to teach. The program offers scholarships for college-bound seniors and CPS alumni enrolled in college, assists in the college selection process, and helps students to obtain teaching internships.

√ **Pittsburgh's Grow Your Own Program** – The Pittsburgh Public School District strongly encourages middle and high school students to choose a career in teaching and eventually come back to work for the district. Students are mentored by teachers, serve as teacher aides within classrooms and can apply for a stipend if they enroll in a teacher-preparation program.

Attracting Mid-Career Professionals into Teaching

Today, there are an increasing number of opportunities for "non-traditional teachers" who have experience in another profession, to serve as part of the country's teaching corps. These opportunities typically include some form of alternative certification, intensive teacher training prior to entering into the classroom, and often offer stipends and flexible strategies for completing certification course work that accommodate the complicated lives of adult learners. Many districts are expanding these special teaching opportunities to their para-professional staff, which includes teacher aides.

Programs Attracting Mid-Career Professionals into Teaching

√ **Troops to Teachers Program** - The Department of Defense developed this program in 1994 to assist military personnel who had been displaced by military reductions to become teachers primarily in math and science. Nationwide, this program has been a successful strategy for reducing teacher vacancies.

√ **Teach for America** – This is a national corps of college graduates who commit two years to teach in under-resourced urban and rural public schools. More than 1,500 individuals serve each year at fifteen locations throughout the country. The human resource departments in New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles agreed that Teach for America has been a successful strategy for reducing teacher vacancies.

Programs in Other Cities Attracting Mid-Career Professionals into Teaching

√ **NYC schools** offer a Teaching Fellows Program for individuals with a Bachelor's Degree in a field that they are interested in teaching. The program offers 1) intensive pre-service training with living stipend, 2) accelerated, fully paid Master's Degree Program, 3) ongoing classroom support and 4) the opportunity to be involved in a network of community leaders. In return, individuals must fulfill a two-year teaching commitment. This program is advertised broadly and targets high achievers.

√ **Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers Program (MINT)** Talented individuals from other professions and new liberal arts graduates are offered: 1) a $20,000 signing bonus, 2) free admission into the MINT summer training program, and 3) ongoing classroom support. Candidates who successfully complete the MINT program receive certification and commit to teaching during the four years that the bonus is paid out.

Local and National Strategies

Improving the Hiring Process

Local and National Strategies Improving the Hiring Process

We took a look at the hiring processes of a number of cities along the East Coast: Boston, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Baltimore, Newark, Portland (Maine), and New Haven. Urban districts typically have slow and inefficient hiring processes that tend to discourage prospective teachers from seeking or accepting employment.

Philadelphia's Strategy's for Improving the Hiring Process

The new teacher's contract, signed in the fall of 2000 with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, specifies changes that may help stabilize the teacher workforce and give individual schools more control over the hiring process.

- √ **Starting this year, the District will require notification of transfer requests prior to May 1, which will allow schools to fill vacancies more quickly.**

- √ **Teachers are provided with extended health benefits if they let the District know of retirement decisions by April 15, which means that vacancies can be filled earlier.**

- √ **With the support of a majority of staff, schools have the option of participating in school-based selection of teachers, which will give individual schools more local control of the hiring process.**

- √ **New teacher appointments to specific schools will last for three years. This measure should help to reduce teacher turnover.**

Practices which improve the process

- √ **Accelerated Testing - Individuals who fulfill their student teaching requirements in the District and receive favorable recommendations from principals do not have to take the oral portion of the teacher certification exam.**

√ **Pre-Hiring - The District pre-hires teachers throughout the recruitment process. This means that individuals are offered a job as soon as all the paperwork is reviewed and found satisfactory, but they do not know where the school placement will be until later in the process.**

National Strategies for Improving the Hiring Process

√ **Site-based selection process** – Many of the districts that we spoke with had some form of site-based selection of teachers. The human resource departments at these districts reported that giving individual school principals and their hiring committees the power to select their own teachers has empowered the administration at individual schools and led to a more unified staff.

> ***"The bottom line is, if schools are going to be held accountable for student achievement, they must have the ability to choose the most qualified teachers in order to meet those standards."***
>
> - Employee in Boston Public School System

New York City – Satellite Offices - New York has created thirty-seven satellite recruitment offices throughout the city to cut down on the difficulty of having one central location; too many applications to process, long lines and traveling inconvenience for teachers. The district trains a corps of teachers and administrators to conduct transcript evaluations. These individuals then staff the satellite locations and work with the personnel director at each site to process applications. The personnel director then interviews qualified candidates and sends them to principals whose schools have openings for another interview. This process is only a few years old, but appears to have streamlined the entire process.

Baltimore – Status letters - Whenever the human resources department receives an application from a prospective teacher, it automatically sends a status letter which lets them know about any information needed to complete the application. This practice expedites the hiring process because it makes teachers aware of any missing items. After the initial status letter is sent, applications are checked every ten days to discover if any new information is received and then another status letter is sent out. This process takes place for sixty days or until the application is complete. The district reported that this process has worked well to keep applicants aware of their application status.

√ **Accelerated Testing** - Another option for districts is to administer the teacher certification examinations when teachers are nearing the end of their course work.

New York City - Graduating education majors are allowed to take the NYC oral examination while still in college. Once the college recommends these students for state certification, they receive a NYC license, which gives them a head start on other applicants. This recruitment tool has worked well to attract those who fulfill their student teacher requirements into New York City Public Schools.

√ **On the spot job offers** - Another strategy that many urban school districts are using to recruit teachers is to provide talented individuals with job offers at career fairs. Typically these types of offers are made to individuals in hard-to-staff subject areas after an extensive interview process. Los Angeles, Atlanta and Minneapolis reported that this strategy has worked well to attract teachers from around the country because it lets the applicants know immediately that they are highly valued and sought after. Once provided the offer however, individuals are still required to participate in the formal application process.

Local and National Response

Residency Requirements

Local and National Response to Residency Requirements

Philadelphia and the Residency Requirement

Philadelphia has long had a residency requirement for City employees; the teachers' residency requirement was adopted by the Board of Education in 1983. If a person were teaching before 1983, the requirement would be waived. Between 1983 and 1998, teachers had to move to the City after their first year of employment. The current rules require teachers to move into the City within three years of appointment.

National Response

We surveyed eleven cities to find out whether a residency requirement existed for teachers and if so what the impact has been on recruiting teachers. The districts that we looked at were: Chicago, District of Columbia, New York, New Haven, Providence, Portland (Maine), Atlanta, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Newark, Trenton, and Boston.

√ **A residency requirement for teachers has appeared to reduce the teaching pool within cities** - Only three of the cities had a residency requirement for teachers: Chicago, Providence and Pittsburgh. The human resource departments in each of these cities reported that this requirement has hampered their ability to attract qualified teachers, particularly in recent years.

New York, New Haven, Atlanta, Baltimore, Newark, Trenton and Boston did not have a residency requirement for teachers. Some cities have residency requirements for city workers and not teachers.

In Boston, there is no residency requirement for teachers; however all other city employees must live within the city. Because of the shortage of qualified teachers, public officials as well as other city workers' unions have not challenged this policy.

District of Columbia, New Haven, Baltimore give hiring preference to employees in the form of extra points on job qualifying exams if they choose to live within the city. There has been no push to require teachers to live within the city because such a requirement could result in a serious teacher shortage.

The remaining cities did not report giving special preferences to city residents seeking city employment, but individuals were encouraged to live in the city.

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Local and National Response to Teacher Retention

One of the keys to solving the teacher shortage crisis in this country is creating ways to keep new teachers. Regardless of how well an individual is prepared in college, new teachers face a number of challenges in the classroom, especially within urban schools. Overcrowded classrooms, poor school leadership, discipline problems, and lack of resources often take a toll on teacher morale. To improve retention, many of the nation's large urban districts have created induction programs as a way of supporting new teachers in their first few years of teaching. In Pennsylvania, the state requires an induction program but is not adequately funded.

Philadelphia's Strategy for Retaining Teachers

New teachers typically receive: 1) three days of orientation prior to the start of the school year 2) monthly sessions after-school where they are matched with a veteran teacher in their school who serves as a mentor and 3) support on an on-going basis from a mentor teacher.

Other Successful Retention Programs

- √ Clark County School District (Las Vegas) - Clark County has a new teacher welcoming center, a networking program, an orientation and training session series and a choose your own mentoring program. The district reports that nearly 96% of new teachers remain in the district after their first year (Reference 4 - Page 55)

- √ Literacy Intern Program (School District of Philadelphia) - Literacy Interns work in the classroom with veteran teachers for a year while working toward permanent certification. Program administrators report an 84% retention rate for first year participants (Reference 3 - Page 54)

National Retention Study

In 1998, Recruiting New Teachers Inc, a national non-profit organization, conducted a national study of new teacher induction practices in some of the nation's largest cities. The study consisted of surveys, follow-up telephone conversations, focus groups with first year teachers and their mentors, interviews with district personnel, and reviews of school contracts and policies.

The survey found a number of frustrations cited by new teachers:[11]

- √ inadequate classroom management skills (82%);
- √ disruptive students (57%);
- √ difficulty organizing time/work schedule (47%).

The programs designed to deal with these barriers range broadly:

Program Management

- √ 84% of Districts coordinate their own induction programs

Major Program Emphasis

- √ Support / assistance by a mentor or coach (93% of Districts surveyed)
- √ Training (58% of Districts surveyed)

Program Activities

- √ Orientation meeting (81%)
- √ Observation in other classrooms (80%)
- √ Workshops / seminars (80%)
- √ Planning / conferencing (67%)
- √ Ongoing feedback / assessment (67%)

Program Evaluation / Outcomes

Induction programs at districts generally reported success in the following areas:

- √ Improved teacher knowledge, skills, and performance
- √ Personal support
- √ Acculturation into school system norms, values, and procedures.

Recommendations

Where Do We Go From Here?

Recommendations

In order to make Philadelphia competitive in attracting teachers, there are things we all can do. Some steps can be taken by our political leaders, some by the school district administration, some by the business and civic leadership of the City, some by the union and the media, and some by all of us. We must:

Increase Financial Incentives to Encourage Teachers to Come and Teach Here.

- √ Offer tuition assistance for masters degrees and programs leading to certification for all teachers.
- √ Provide more housing incentives – adopt the HUD partnership concept of Los Angeles and Baltimore as well as student teacher options of Clark County (Las Vegas) and Jefferson County (Kentucky).
- √ Provide incentives such as free masters degrees and enhanced hiring bonus for all hard-to-staff areas.
- √ Adopt a program to attract mid-career professionals similar to New York City and Massachusetts. In designing these programs, we must include more pre-service training and focused on the hard-to-staff schools and areas.

Improve our Public Image

- √ Involve the Chamber of Commerce, District, union, parents, children, and media in a campaign to improve the image of the District.
- √ Engage a marketing firm to advertise the rewards and benefits of working as a teacher in the District.
- √ Upgrade the District website, making it easier for prospective teachers to locate all of the benefits available to them.
- √ Organize regular bus tours of schools for prospective teachers interested in visiting schools.
- √ Work on changing both the reality and perception of school safety and discipline.

Improve the Hiring Process

- √ Computerize the entire hiring process.
- √ Consider Baltimore's system of regularly informing candidates of their employment status.
- √ Encourage schools throughout the District to adopt site-based selection.
- √ Institute early hiring and school assignment notification for teachers.
- √ Undertake training and staff development of human resource staff and provide incentives to ensure that prospective teachers are told of all opportunities available to them.

Improve Teacher Induction Program

- √ Adopt aspects of Clark County (Las Vegas) Program by creating a strong partnership with the business community, regularly contacting prospective teachers, and developing a new teacher welcome center.
- √ Adopt aspects of Philadelphia's Literacy Intern Program for all teachers; provide tuition assistance for certification, intense summer practicum including classroom observation, on-site partner teacher support, as well as external (adjunct faculty) mentors.

Change the Residency Requirement

- √ In order to secure and retain qualified teachers for our children, we must place a moratorium on the residency requirement.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Survey

This survey was distributed to parents and community leaders by The Alliance Organizing Project.

Please take a minute and complete this survey. The information that you give us will help to improve Philadelphia's public schools!

Name _____ **School (s) Name** _____

Phone number _____

Address _____

_____

School(s) Name _____

Here are a list of problems that Philadelphia's schools might face. For each, please check off whether it's a major problem, a minor problem, not a problem, or you don't know.

School Issue	Major	Minor	Not a Problem	Don't Know
a. Students who are undisciplined and disruptive				
b. Poor academic standards				
c. Overcrowded classrooms				
d. Discrimination against children because of race or gender				
e. Public schools are unsafe or unhealthy				
f. Lack of computers and technology				
g. Violence and lack of school safety				
h. Lack of parental involvement				
I. Student use of alcohol or illegal drugs				
j. Not enough money for public schools				
k. Not enough qualified teachers				

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Appendix 2 - The Process

October 2, 2000 - Initial Meeting

- The initial meeting was held with members of Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) and the Alliance Organizing Project. The purpose was to define the roles that each organization would undertake in order to meet the goals and objectives of the grant proposal.
- The Alliance Organizing Project was responsible for the development and dissemination of a survey to identify the two public education issues that were most important to members of the Philadelphia community.
- PCCY's role was to conduct research on the strategies being implemented around the country related to the issues that were identified through the survey research.
- At the end of the first meeting, both organizations agreed that the executive directors would meet biweekly and an Advisory Board consisting of staff and board members from each organization would meet once a month.

October 17, 2000 - Initial Advisory Board Meeting

- At this meeting, it was decided that the role of the advisory board would be to monitor the progress of the work between the two organizations and ensure that we were meeting all of our grant responsibilities.
- The Alliance Organizing Project presented the survey to the Advisory board and the group discussed strategies for getting the survey's completed. The survey used in the report is a modified version of a national survey conducted by National Public Radio in 1999. It was decided that the bulk of the surveys would be distributed to eight schools and other community partners that the Alliance Organizing Project has worked with over the years. The parents, teachers, administrators and community members who completed the surveys are active members in the quest for education reform in Philadelphia.

October 19, 2000 - First City Wide Community Meeting

- The Alliance Organizing Project held a city-wide meeting of community members to announce the Neighborhood City-School Initiative and begin discussing the public school issues most important to people.

October 20, 2000 - November 20, 2000

- During this period, weekly meetings were held between the two organizations in addition to the monthly Advisory meetings.

- The Alliance Organizing Project conducted the survey research and kept a tally of the issues that were identified.
- 279 completed surveys were received, primarily from the North Philadelphia area where the Alliance Organizing Project carries out the bulk of its organizing efforts. 216 surveys were from schools within the School District of Philadelphia, 21 surveys from churches, and 42 surveys were from other Philadelphia community members with multiple affiliations.
- In order to choose our two school issues, we tallied the number of times that a particular issue was checked off in the Major category of the survey. Among the issues identified as being most important were: disruptive students, violence and lack of school safety, not enough teachers and too many substitutes, and overcrowded classrooms. We condensed these four categories into two issues – school safety and the need for more qualified teachers.

November 20, 2000 Advisory Committee Meeting

- At this meeting it was decided that the initial report would focus on the issue of teacher vacancies. February 22, 2001 was the date set by the committee to have a completed report on teacher vacancies and recruitment and retention strategies.

November 29, 2000 City-Wide Meeting

- The Alliance Organizing Project held a second community meeting to discuss the two issues that were identified through the survey research. Community members in attendance gave personal accounts of their experiences with the public schools. This information was recorded for use in the final report.

November 30, 2000 - January 30, 2001

- Weekly organizational meetings and monthly advisory meetings took place.
- PCCY conducted research on the issue of teacher vacancies and recruitment and retention strategies. Various individuals in the School District of Philadelphia's human resource department were contacted as well as human resource departments in school districts around the country. There was also an exhaustive review of all the current scholarly research on recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. Throughout the process we spoke with public school parents, teachers and students to gain both a local and national understanding of this issue.

January 31, 2001- Third City Wide Meeting

- A third meeting was held to update community members on the progress of the research and discussions took place to identify strategies to implement some of the "best practices" that we found in other cities, here in Philadelphia.

February 1, 2001 – February 20, 2001

- The focus of the both the weekly organization meetings and Advisory Committee Meetings was to create a set of advocacy recommendations based on the advice from community members and models that have been successful in school districts throughout the country.

References

Reference 1

Positive Aspects of Alternative Certification Teacher Programs

There is a vast amount of literature about alternative certification programs, both positive and negative. In support of alternative certification programs, a higher percentage of alternatively certified teachers tend to have a background in math and science as compared to "traditionally certified teachers." Secondly, a high percentage of recruits are minorities; therefore it appears that alternative certification programs diversifies the workforce. This teaching corps can help alleviate the severity of the teacher shortage problem within the inner city.[12]

Negative Aspects of Alternative Certification Teacher Programs

The arguments against alternative certification programs may be just as compelling. Critics point to research revealing that alternatively certified teachers appear to have lower academic qualifications than traditionally certified teachers. Secondly, a lower percentage of these individuals consider teaching as a life-long career as compared to traditional teachers. Also, opponents claim that a large number of recruits come directly from college or education-related positions, calling into question the experience that these individuals are truly bringing to the classroom and suggesting that some college graduates are using this certification to bypass traditional, teacher-preparation programs.[13]

The jury is still out on alternative certification but with the national teacher shortage crisis not showing any signs of letting up, reliance on alternatively certified teachers is an option being exercised by a growing number of school districts.

Reference 2

State of Pennsylvania Requirements for Alternative Teaching Certification

The following are basic criteria that must be met in order to receive an emergency certificate in Pennsylvania:

1. Candidates must have Bachelor's degree with a 3.0 GPA in the subject area they intend to teach; or a graduate degree in the subject area they intend to teach; or a Bachelor's degree and ten years of experience in the subject area that they intend to teach.

2. Candidates must pass the appropriate certification exams, which include the appropriate subject area exam(s) and the Communication Skills and General Knowledge exams.

3. After a school selects an individual for the program, the collaborative unit (District and college that individual is attending to attain certification) submits an individually prescribed plan with an alternative certification application to the Department of Education.

4. Individuals who receive the Alternative Candidate Certificate have 15 months to complete up to 12 credit hours of coursework as outlined in the individually prescribed plan. These credits must include coursework in classroom management and effective teaching strategies. An intensive 6 credit seminar must be completed before entering the classroom. The remaining coursework will include up to 6 credit hours or 180 hours of professional development classes, or some combination of the two.

5. The Alternative Certification Program culminates in a provisional Level I certificate only upon successful completion of up to 12 credit hours of coursework, the Principles of Learning and Teaching Exam, and the recommendation of the collaborative unit. The certificate is issued for a period of 15 months to enable the candidate to complete the program. The certification cannot be reissued.

Reference 3

Alternative Certification Programs offered by the School District of Philadelphia

√ Apprentice Teachers - These individuals teach their own classes and receive the salary benefits of a certified teacher. They are provided with three days of new teacher orientation in August, new teacher support classes, and a mentor teacher. They must complete nine credits towards permanent certification each year in order to continue teaching.

√ Teach Philadelphia (a subsidiary of Teach for America) - These individuals are college graduates who are interested in teaching within their area of undergraduate study. They are employed for two years, work within middle schools and receive the pay and benefits of a certified teacher. They are provided with three days of new teacher orientation in August, new teacher support classes, and a mentor teacher. They must complete nine credits towards permanent certification each year in order to continue teaching.

√ Troops-to-Teacher's Program - This program is offered to military personnel who have been displaced or have been stationed within a particular area and are interested in teaching. Individuals who qualify for this program are required to have a BA degree and complete nine credits towards permanent certification each year in order to continue teaching.

√ Pennsylvania Teacher Intern Program - Participants who teach in this program are typically individuals with a BA and background in Math and/or Science. They enter the program and are eligible to teach after completing courses towards teacher certification. The college program that they are affiliated with monitors their progress within the classroom and their teaching experience fulfills their student teaching requirement. They receive the pay and benefits of a certified teacher. They must complete nine credits towards permanent certification each year in order to continue teaching.

√ Literacy Interns - Literacy Interns are individuals with undergraduate and/or graduate and professional degrees who are trained in early literacy, supported with mentors who are experts in reading and paired with veteran teachers with intensive training in early literacy. They work with veteran teachers to support the instructional program by focusing on individual students and small learning groups. They must complete nine credits towards permanent certification each year in order to continue teaching.

Reference 4

Throughout conversations with human resource departments, the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada was frequently cited for its exemplary practices. We spoke with employees in the human resource department and reviewed a National Study conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. to find out more about the teacher induction program.[14]

- √ Before teachers arrive in the district, they receive telephone contacts from a member of the business community and a teacher from the same area of the country where they reside.

- √ New teachers receive a "survival guide" which acclimates them to various resources in the Las Vegas community.

- √ The District recently created a Welcome Center for new teachers. The Center provides support in a variety of ways; connects new hires with other new teachers and veteran teachers and provides information about the school district and surrounding community.

- √ New teachers get a chance to meet with other teachers and members of the community through a series of fun activities on "Get to Know Your Community Day," a community fair which highlights all of the perks available to teachers, free giveaways and icebreaker activities. As reported by the Human Resources Department, "The environment of this event is like a pep rally."

- √ The District hosts a two-day New Teacher Orientation. The orientation consists of a review of policies and procedures, standards, curriculum frameworks and classroom management techniques. In addition, veteran teachers share their experiences and field questions from new teachers.

- √ Inductees must attend four training sessions during their first year at locations that normally serve as professional development centers throughout the school year. Trainings cover a variety of topics including curriculum development, classroom management techniques and strategies for dealing with the challenges of working within inner city classrooms. To accommodate teachers who have extracurricular responsibilities, sessions are held during school hours and substitutes are hired to replace teachers who attend the sessions.

- √ New teachers select their own mentor with the assistance of a site-based facilitator. The District reported that this method has worked better than using the traditional mentoring model, which artificially pairs new teachers with mentors.

- √ Teacher induction participants complete qualitative surveys. These studies reveal that participants value the networking opportunities that the program provides and benefit greatly from the classroom management and student behavior management sessions.

Retention rate for new teachers in Las Vegas is close to 96%.

Reference 5

Future Barriers to Attracting Teachers - Stricter Teacher Certification Guidelines

On October 7, 2000, two new components of PA's Teachers for the 21st Century Initiative to improve the quality of the teaching pool were introduced by the Ridge Administration. It appears that these new requirements, in addition to the raising of the passing scores for written certification examinations, may actually reduce the number of certified teachers in Pennsylvania.

Although raising standards and improving teacher quality are key components of education reform, it is likely that a number of graduating seniors in teacher-preparation programs in Pennsylvania will decide to teach in other states where the bar is not set as high. In fact, faculty from the Temple University College of Education, the District's largest source of new teachers, have estimated that as many as 1/3 of their education graduates may not meet these new requirements. Other local colleges and universities have raised similar concerns over the new State certification requirements.

New Teacher Requirements

Individuals who wish to gain admission into a teacher preparation program must complete a minimum of three semesters of college-level, liberal arts coursework with at least a 3.0 GPA for admission into a teacher preparation program.

Individuals who are currently enrolled in teacher preparation programs must fulfill the same course requirements as a major in the discipline that they will be teaching as well as maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA in the subject that they intend to teach.

Footnotes

Footnotes

[1] Elizabeth Fideler and David Haselkorn. (1999). *Learning the Ropes: Urban Teacher Induction Programs and Practices in the United States.* Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.

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[3] *Quality Counts 2000 - Who Should Teach?* Education Week (2000). Bethesda, MD: www.edweek.org.

[4] *Quality Counts 2000* ibid.

[5] Elizabeth Fideler and David Haselkorn ibid.

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[8] *The Facts about Public Schools in Philadelphia.* (2000). The School District of Philadelphia.

[9] Elizabeth Useem. (1999). *Findings from a Survey of Student Teachers in the School District of Philadelphia.* The Philadelphia Education Fund

[10] Elizabeth Useem (2000). *New Teacher Staffing and Comprehensive Middle School Reform: Philadelphia's Experience.* The Philadelphia Education Fund

[11] Elizabeth Fideler and David Haselkorn ibid.

[12] Jian Ping Shen. (1997). *Has the Alternative Certification Policy Materialized its Promise? A Comparison Between Traditionally and Alternatively Certified Teachers in Public Schools.* Vol. 19, No. 3. Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis.

[13] Jian Ping Shen ibid.

[14] Elizabeth Fideler and David Haselkorn ibid.

In addition to the sources listed above, information for this report was obtained from interviews with members of the Office of Human Resources at the School District of Philadelphia as well as the Human Resources Departments of school districts throughout the country.

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The City-Neighborhood Schools Initiative

A Joint Project of Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth and The Alliance Organizing Project

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